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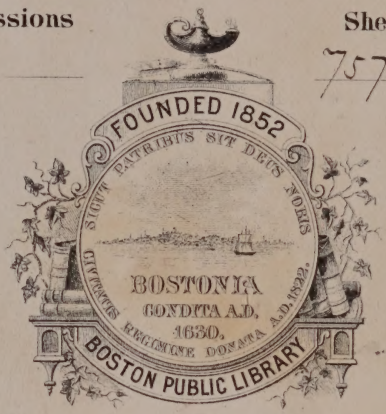

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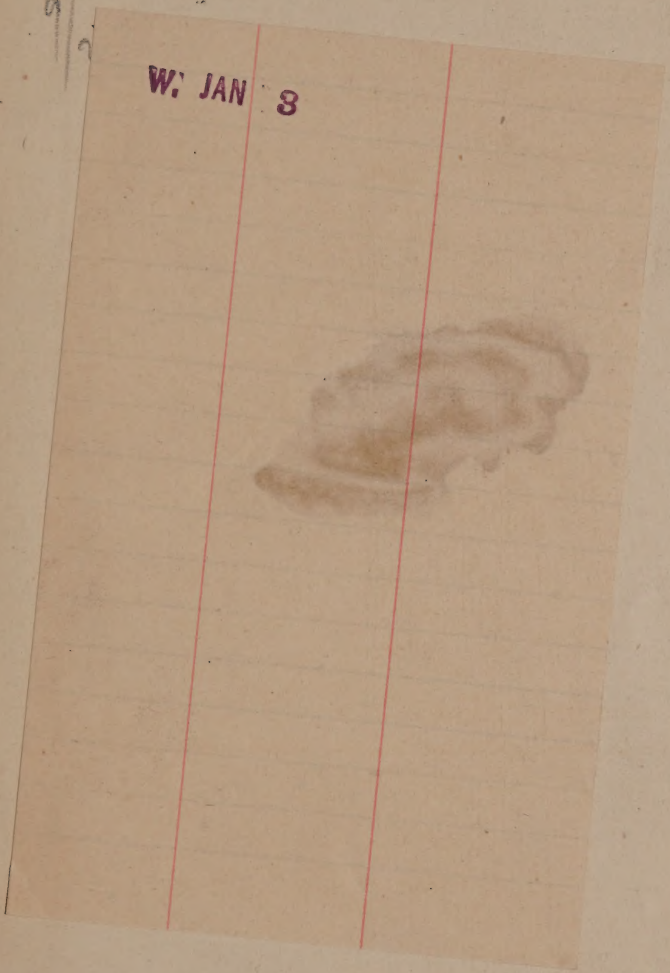
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THE

PRESENT CONDITION AND CHARACTER

OF THE

IMMIGRATION MOVEMENT.

AN ARGUMENT MADE AT THE CONFERENCE OF CHARITIES, SARATOGA SPRINGS, SEPT. 7, 1876, IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED NATIONAL HEAD-MONEY TAX ON IMMIGRANTS.

BY

HAMILTON ANDREWS HILL,

LATE SECRETARY OF THE BOSTON BOARD OF TRADE AND OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF TRADE.

BOSTON:

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ALTHOUGH I was absent from the country when the Social Science Association held its meeting in Detroit in 1875, I had the honor of contributing a paper on some of the relations and aspects of the immigration question, which was read at a session of the Conference of Charities, and which, upon the whole, I believe, was favorably received. I desire to avail myself of the present opportunity to submit some further statements and suggestions on the same subject.* I may not be able to coincide in all the views to which Mr. Sanborn has just given expression; but I am quite sure that that gentleman, no less than the other members of the conference, would desire this important question to be discussed from every point of observation, and in the light of all the attainable facts.

The falling-off in the immigrant arrivals in the United States, noticed and commented upon last year, has steadily continued since, as the following figures will show: —

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* This pamphlet contains the substance of remarks made at a session of the Conference of Charities, held at Saratoga Springs, in connection with the annual meeting of the Social Science Association, Sept. 7, 1876, in reply to a paper read by Mr. F. B. Sanborn, chairman of the Massachusetts Board of State Charities, recommending the imposition, under National authority, of a head-money tax on immigrant passengers arriving at all United States ports.

IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES.

1873	422,545
1874	260,814
1875	191,231
Six months, ended June 30, 1875 . .	106,825
Six months, ended June 30, 1876 . .	85,580
Estimate for the year ending Dec. 31, 1876	153,000

Comparing each subsequent year with 1873, we find that the falling-off in 1874 was 38 per cent; in 1875 it was 55 per cent; and in 1876, according to our estimate, it will be 64 per cent, or nearly two thirds.

But in the mean time there has been a strong counter-current in progress, setting from our shores towards Europe, and this deserves our careful attention.

The following statement shows the number of steerage passengers brought to and taken away from the port of Boston by the Cunard Steamship Company since 1873: —

	Steerage Passengers landed.	Steerage Passengers embarked.
1873 . . .	25,937	5,813
1874 . . .	15,885	7,594
1875 . . .	10,126	8,093
1876 (to June 30) .	3,109	3,373
	55,057	24,873

The return movement began immediately after the financial crisis in the autumn of 1873. In 1874 it amounted to one half as much as the immigration; in 1875 it fell short of it by only one fifth; and during the first half of the present year it exceeded it by nearly 10 per cent. It reduced the net immigration of the port, during the three and one half years named, by 45 per cent.

I have not been able to obtain precise returns of the steerage passengers taken away from New York. In the following table will be found the total number of immigrants landed at that port between January 1, 1873, and June 30, 1876, and all the passengers embarked by nine steamship lines sailing between New York and Europe: —

New York.	Steerage Passengers landed.	Passengers embarked.
1873	278,735	81,068
1874	153,747	101,061
1875	100,851	77,902
1876 (to June 30) . .	39,539	33,827

Allowing 25 per cent for cabin passengers, this statement shows that while the departures at the port of New York of the immigrating population have not been so numerous proportionately as at Boston, they have exceeded since the beginning of 1874 certainly one half the number of arrivals, and in the first six months of 1876 they were only one third less than the whole.

The total immigration of 1873, as we have seen, was 422,545. The net immigration for the first half of the current year at the two principal ports of the country, so far as the returns have been accessible, proves to have been only 13,905. We may infer from this that the net immigration at all ports in 1876 will not exceed 100,000, showing a net loss, as compared with 1873, of more than 300,000.

Such a falling-off in the great army of producers and consumers which has been wont to land upon our shores, while it forcibly illustrates the severity of the industrial depression through which we are passing, represents also a most serious loss to the aggregate national wealth. If, as Dr. Young estimates, the capitalized value of an immigrant on the average is $800 (and other statisticians place it higher), this loss

reaches apparently the enormous sum of $240,000,000. Actually, however, large numbers of people will ultimately come hither, who are at present deterred by the unfavorable accounts which they receive of the condition of affairs among us.

Allow me, now, to present some statistics relating to the emigration from Ireland to the United States during the last thirty years. The following table is made up from Dr. Young's valuable work on "Labor in Europe and America," and other authorities: —

1846	58,043	1856	62,232	1866	98,647
1847	111,984	1857	73,502	1867	114,411
1848	122,833	1858	35,916	1868	74,779
1849	175,319	1859	44,115	1869	79,030
1850	178,399	1860	61,511	1870	76,732
1851	236,214	1861	33,274	1871	64,068
1852	160,149	1862	35,859	1872	69,761
1853	163,476	1863	96,088	1873	75,848
1854	105,931	1864	89,442	1874	47,688
1855	56,382	1865	82,918	1875	29,969

Annual average for thirty years	90,484
Annual average for the last five years	57,467
Six months ended June 30, 1875	19,604
Six months ended June 30, 1876	9,210

These figures show that in 1875 the emigration from Ireland to this country was less by about one half than the average of the preceding five years, and less by two thirds than the average for the preceding thirty years; also, that during the first six months of the current year, it was less by fifty-three per cent than in the corresponding period in 1875, while the falling-off in the total emigration from all countries, for the same time, as compared with the first half of last year, was only twenty per cent.

I will not stop to consider the probabilities with regard to the revival of the immigration movement and its progress in the future, as these were fully dwelt upon at Detroit. It will be enough to remark in this connection that, with the return of commercial activity and industrial prosperity in the United States, a large majority of those who have been going back to Europe during recent years will undoubtedly retrace their way westwardly across the Atlantic, and that fresh immigrants will come hither in very large numbers, perhaps in larger numbers than at any time in the past. This state of things, when it shall come to pass, we must accept as inevitable, whether it may appear to us desirable or otherwise, according to the point of view from which we regard it. Speaking for myself, I must confess that I anticipate the immigration of the future to the United States without serious misgivings, as, upon the whole, I accept that of the past decidedly without regret.

I might speak of the influence and effect of immigration upon the individual immigrant and the family, and upon the community or country from which they come; but I will confine myself to its economic and social bearings upon ourselves, with which we are more especially concerned at the present meeting. Viewed in its beneficial effects upon our own country, upon the settlement of its lands, upon the establishment of its industries, and upon the development of its varied resources, it has usually been regarded with favor by our public men. To prove this, I might quote from the speeches and writings of our most eminent statesmen; but it will be enough for my purpose to refer to the utterances of three distinguished jurists, in opinions given by them in a memorable case determined in the Supreme Court of the United States in 1849, when head-money taxes on alien passengers, levied under State laws, were first declared unconstitutional.

Mr. Justice McLean said, "To encourage foreign immigration was a cherished policy of this country at the time the Constitution was adopted."

Mr. Justice Catron said, "From the first day of our separate existence to this time has the policy of drawing hither aliens, to the end of their becoming citizens, been a favorite policy of the United States; it has been cherished by Congress with rare steadiness and vigor. By this policy our extensive and fertile country has, to a considerable extent, been filled up by a respectable population, both physically and mentally, one that is easily governed and usually of approved patriotism."

Mr. Justice Grier said, "It is the cherished policy of the General Government to encourage and invite Christian foreigners of our own race to seek an asylum within our borders, and to convert these waste lands into productive farms, and thus add to the wealth, population, and power of the nation."

How much this hospitable and fraternal policy has done for us may be seen from the record of seven of our great interior States and four of the Territories, as it stands in the ninth census. It appears from the returns that in 1870, in Kansas, the proportion of population of foreign birth and parentage was 24 per cent; in Iowa, 35 per cent; in Nebraska, 36 per cent; in Illinois, 38 per cent; in Michigan, 41 per cent; in Dakotah and Montana, 50 per cent; in Nevada, 60 per cent; in Idaho, 62 per cent; in Minnesota, 65 per cent; and in Arizona, 70 per cent. It appears, further, that in the same census year the true valuation of real and personal property in these seven States and four Territories, peopled so largely from abroad, was $4,107,524,292, more than one eighth of the total returned wealth of the entire country.

But there are those, it would seem, who, while recognizing and conceding, as they are obliged to do, the inestimable

advantages which accrue to the central and western States from the influx of European population, complain that the seaboard States, and especially New York and Massachusetts, whose territory it first touches and traverses, find it almost, if not altogether, a calamity and a curse. We read, for example, in the last annual report of the Massachusetts Board of State Charities, as follows: "Without considering, therefore, the general and obvious causes of pauperism in Massachusetts, we may say that its chief occasion or proximate cause is immigration. And thus, by a little reflection, we may learn that it is necessary to watch and regulate immigration if we would check the growth of pauperism in our Commonwealth." Similar expressions of suspicion and distrust with regard to those who come from beyond the Atlantic to cast in their lot and to make their home with us, are only too common, as we all know, in the publications of the New York Board of Charities and the New York Emigration Commissioners. Let us inquire whether they are supported and justified by the facts of the case.

I will refer first and more particularly to my own State. I had occasion last spring to lay before a Committee of the Legislature, the following table, compiled from the Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of State Charities, showing the number of State paupers and the number of immigrant arrivals in Massachusetts from the years 1860 to 1874, inclusive:

	State Paupers.	State Paupers, including the sick.	Immigration into Massachusetts.
1860 . . .	2,537		7,874
1861 . . .	2,911		5,091
1862 . . .	3,156		2,196
1863 . . .	2,750		5,316
1864 . . .	2,527		5,830
1865 . . .	2,591	2,650	7,057
1866 . . .	2,399	2,550	11,527

	State Paupers.	State Paupers, including the sick.	Immigration into Massachusetts.
1867 . . .	2,259	2,400	11,266
1868 . . .	2,309	2,560	15,128
1869 . . .	2,109	2,360	26,414
1870 . . .	1,940	2,140	30,069
1871 . . .	1,963	2,163	22,904
1872 . . .	1,939	2,139	26,992
1873 . . .	1,965	2,215	31,042
1874 . . .	2,220	2,470	20,223

Here we find that in 1862, when the number of State paupers was the largest, the immigration was smaller by at least one half than that of any other year mentioned in the table, smaller, indeed, than in any year since 1839, also, that in the years 1870 to 1874, when the State pauperism was at the lowest point, the immigration was the largest. We find, also, that while the pauperism, including the State sick poor, increased in 1874 ten per cent over that of 1873, the immigration of 1874 was less by thirty-five per cent than that of 1873. In point of fact, then, immigration and pauperism are not only not one and the same thing practically in Massachusetts, as some gentlemen would have us believe, but it is difficult to trace any direct connection between them.

A further comparison may be drawn between the resident population of the State, native and foreign, and its pauperism: —

Massachusetts.	1870.	1875.
Total population	1,457,351	1,651,912
Foreign born	353,319	418,774
Of foreign birth or parentage .	626,211	
Born in Ireland	216,120	234,556

In 1870 the foreign-born population was 24 per cent, and the Irish, 15 per cent of the whole; in 1875 the foreign-born population was 25 per cent, and the Irish, 14 per cent of the whole.

Statistics of pauperism are imperfect and unsatisfactory, which fail to supply us with the average length of residence in the poor-houses, of the paupers enumerated. The only returns accessible to us show the number of paupers at a given date, but this perhaps will sufficiently illustrate our subject. In the first volume of the ninth census, we find that on the 1st of June, 1870, there were 5,777 inmates in the various poor-houses of Massachusetts, and they are thus classified: —

Native,		
White	5,323	
Colored	73	
		5,396
Foreign		381
		5,777

At that date, the foreign element in the pauperism of Massachusetts was about 7 per cent, the foreign-born population of the Commonwealth being 24 per cent of the whole.

But this was at midsummer and in the midst of prosperous times. By the kindness of Colonel Wright, who has had charge of the State census of 1875, I have been supplied with advance sheets, which enable me to lay before you the number of inmates in the poor-houses on the 1st of May, 1875: —

Born in Massachusetts	2,672	
Other American	391	
		3,063
Born in Ireland	901	
Other foreign	302	
		1,203
Unknown		71
		4,337

It is gratifying to notice an important decrease in the pauperism of the State during the last five years, notwithstanding the exceptional severity of the times. Indeed, according to the official reports, there were as many persons in the various almshouses in 1840 as there were in 1875, although the population had doubled in the mean time. But it is not strange that during the continuance of the present business depression, the burden should be found to bear with peculiar weight on the foreign-born population, from which the classes temporarily thrown out of employ are largely made up, and, consequently, that the proportion of the foreign-born pauperism should show an increase between 1870 and 1875; and yet, taken as a whole, even in the latter year, this part of the pauperism of the State was not much in excess, proportionately, of the foreign-born population, and leaving the Irish out of the account it had not increased at all. As we have seen, the foreign-born population in 1875 was 25 per cent, and the Irish-born, 14 per cent of the whole; the foreign pauperism reported by the State census was 28 per cent; of this, the Irish contributed 21 per cent, against 7 per cent representing all other foreigners. Taking all the circumstances into the account, Massachusetts has little occasion for fault-finding with its foreign-born citizens, comprising one fourth of the entire population, when, in the midst of the unwonted manufacturing and commercial depression through which we have been and are now passing, they furnish only 28 per cent of the pauperism of the State, and, omitting one nationality, only 7 per cent.

But there is no evidence that any part of the pauperism of Massachusetts is increasing because or in consequence of the immigration from Europe now arriving or recently landed upon its shores. The noticeable increase reported between 1870 and 1875 was in the Irish pauperism; but the Irish immigration to the United States during these

years, was less on the average by three eighths than the average of the last thirty years, and in 1875 it was less than in any year since 1843. Again, it is well known that from two thirds to three fourths of the immigrants who now come to our Atlantic ports, have a fixed destination before them, and, generally, friends or acquaintances ready to receive, and, if necessary, to assist them; and that all, with hardly an exception, bring money in their pockets, and family supplies and implements of industry in their baggage. No one can stand to-day on the Cunard dock at East Boston, as the steerage passengers are landing with their effects, and maintain that from such as they the pauper class is swelled; and I have no doubt that the same remark would apply to the immigrants at New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

I have seen no returns of the pauperism of the State of New York later than those of the ninth census, in which the inmates of almshouses, on the 1st of June, 1870, are thus enumerated: —

Native,		
White	5,289	
Colored	664	
		5,953
Foreign		8,147
		14,100

At that date the foreign-born pauperism of the State was 57 per cent of the whole, the proportion of its foreign-born population being 26 per cent, and of its Irish-born population about one eighth. But it should be remembered not only that the city of New York, where this pauperism centres, like every great commercial metropolis, draws to itself and retains the poor, the idle and shiftless, and the vicious generally, but also that in the past it has been made the

home of and has been largely built up by a portion of the heterogeneous foreign population landed upon its wharves, representing all kinds and conditions of people. It contains more than 400,000 resident foreigners; with its immediate suburbs, it has a larger Irish population than Dublin, and, with Brooklyn, it has a much larger German population than Munich or Cologne, — one as large as Leipsic and Bremen combined.

Other countries are competing with the United States, as they have not previously done, for the surplus population of Europe, and they hold out such inducements as attract the poorer class of emigrants, that is to say, those without money, leaving the better class for the most part to come to us. Within a week I have received a letter from one of our consuls in Switzerland, in which he says, "Brazil, Australia, and other States are making great efforts to get the Swiss emigrants, and take them free of charge." The Government of Canada spends four or five dollars on each to obtain settlers in the Dominion, besides the value of the grants made to them after their arrival. Under the influence of "assisted passages" and other substantial inducements, the emigration from Great Britain to Australia and New Zealand has greatly increased of late, as the following table will show: —

BRITISH EMIGRATION TO THE AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

1867 . . .	14,466	1871 . . .	12,227
1868 . . .	12,809	1872 . . .	15,876
1869 . . .	14,901	1873 . . .	26,428
1870 . . .	17,065	1874 . . .	53,958

I was in England during the agricultural strike in the Eastern Counties in the winter of 1874–5, when a struggle between the farmers and the National Agricultural Laborers'

Union was protracted during eighteen weeks, and when 2,400 men were locked out. Agents from Canada and New Zealand were promptly on the spot, and succeeded in persuading many of the disaffected men, with their families, to emigrate to those colonies; but I did not hear that efforts were made to bring any of these people to the United States. From statistics afterwards published, it appears that the cost to the National Union in money expended for lock-out pay, migration, and emigration was nearly £25,000. While many returned subsequently to their work, four hundred of the men migrated to other parts of the kingdom, and four hundred and forty went abroad at the time, many others following later. Of all who thus emigrated it is safe to say that not one came to this country; there was no one from the United States authorized to render them the pecuniary aid of which they stood in need, or disposed to advise them to come here penniless; while other communities, urgently needing their presence and their industry, were ready to give them all requisite assistance. Nor was the Agricultural Laborers' Union disposed to promote emigration to the United States in this emergency; on the contrary, its president, Mr. Joseph Arch, and its other leaders, gave their influence decidedly in favor of Canada. There is no doubt that under such conditions as now exist, the emigration from Ireland which followed the terrible years of the famine, would have been diverted much more largely than it was to the British Colonies. The ports offered to the emigrants for their choice were Quebec, Boston, New York, and New Orleans. Most of them selected Boston and New York. The circumstances were exceptional and pressing: we could not have refused to receive these starving people, without being false to our trust; England could do nothing for them at the moment but to send them to us. There is no evidence, however, that the British Government or its subor-

dinate authorities, as is sometimes charged, deliberately, systematically, and persistently turn their poverty-stricken and dependent ones over to us. There may be an instance of sharp practice, now and then, on the part of a local workhouse board in England, but this does not make good the charge. I suppose that sometimes, in this country, the responsiblity of maintaining a pauper is unjustly shifted from one State to another, or from one county or town to another; but such cases are not made the occasion for general accusation. The truth is, the influence of the authorities and of the press in England is, for the most part, and not unnaturally, used to promote emigration to the dependencies of the British Crown; but nothing is done there in a hostile spirit to interfere with emigration to the United States, as in Germany for example, where peremptory orders are reported to have recently issued from the Ministry of Commerce to all the local agents of ocean steamship companies in the empire, forbidding them, under penalty of fine and imprisonment, to give information about America to inquirers, and enjoining them to confine themselves in what they say to the rates of passage, names of vessels, and dates of sailing. Other governments on the continent feel very much on this subject as does that of Berlin, but they do not manifest their opposition so openly and emphatically. It seems rather absurd that they should, at the same time, be accused of promoting the emigration of their people to the United States.

In view of the very great falling-off in the European immigration to this country since 1873, and especially in the arrivals from Ireland both previously and subsequently to that time; in view, also, of the fact that the immigrants of late years and at the present time coming hither, have been and are abundantly able to take care of themselves, and that almost without exception they add to the producing rather

than to the pauper class; in view, further, of the active competition going on among various countries and colonies for the surplus population of Europe, and of the opposition, more or less avowed, of many of the governments concerned, to its coming to the United States, — it would seem that our present attitude towards this movement should be one of friendliness and encouragement, and that our greeting of those who come from beyond the sea, to identify themselves with our interests and institutions, should be hearty and cordial. Not only should no obstacle be interposed in their way, but everything practicable should be done to promote their security in transit and on arrival, and to facilitate their journey to their new homes, wherever these may be. Both the political parties, in the platforms on which the presidential contest of the present year is to be carried on, have recognized the duty of affording ample protection to the immigrant and to the naturalized citizen. We have heard about protection to-day; but it has been protection against the immigrant, not for him, that has been called for. He is to be "protected," so far as he is concerned, by being made to pay a head-money tax on himself and every member of his household; and the country at large is to be "protected" by collecting this money and paying it over to the seaboard States through which he passes on his way to the interior, for the support of local Boards of Charities and local charitable institutions.

Such a tax, always unjust, and as we now know always unconstitutional in the manner in which it has been levied, it would be most inopportune to revive at the present time, as has been recommended here to-day; yet a bill was introduced late in the recent session of Congress, and urgently but (most fortunately) unsuccessfully pressed in committee, for the reimposition of this tax under national authority at all our ports, and, we are told, will be brought forward

again next winter. No general hearing, so far as is known, has been given upon this measure at Washington, nor has any one of the great interests of the country, mercantile, manufacturing or agricultural, called for its enactment. Massachusetts has not asked for the passage of such a law; three, I may say, four times its Legislature has pronounced, by most decided majorities, against head-money taxation, and having voluntarily abandoned the collection of the tax at its ports four years before it was declared unconstitutional, it is not likely that it would now ask the United States Government to collect it in its behalf. Nor does any seaboard State, except New York, ask for such a law. Portland, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, as well as Boston, feel themselves quite competent to take care of the immigration which, with the revival of business, will undoubtedly seek their wharves to a greater extent than in the past, to enact all necessary police and sanitary regulations with reference to it, and to make their docks as free to commerce as are their lighted headlands and harbors and their paved highways. The West, certainly, desires no such legislation. The money to be collected from the immigrant and his family, under the proposed law, is to be divided among the charitable institutions on the coast; as a matter of fact not a dollar of it will go to the interior. Besides, the West understands that every payment enforced from the newly-arrived immigrant takes just so much from his available capital and his producing power, and leaves him so much the less for buying his homestead, stocking his farm, building his house, and maintaining his family while waiting for the first returns from his land.

The great State of New York, thus standing alone in this call on Congress for assistance in receiving its proportion of the national immigration, may properly be asked to cease its demand for the renewal and nationalization of this tax,

which, under all circumstances, is obnoxious and unjust in its character, and for which no existing necessity can be pleaded in mitigation. Especially may New York reasonably be asked to do this, seeing that during the last quarter of a century it has been levying a toll on the immigration passing through its chief city, amounting in the aggregate to millions of dollars, with which it has made valuable purchases of land, and erected extensive and costly buildings for charitable, sanitary, and religious purposes. All this property it now owns and possesses, paid for by the immigrants of the past: it is not too much to expect that it will maintain and perpetuate it in the future for its own benefit, at its own charge.

It is not clear that any legislation by Congress is called for at this time, in the interest of immigration or in connection with or behalf of the immigrant; but whenever any measure on the subject shall be brought forward, it will be the duty of every interest in the country, industrial and philanthropic, to consider it carefully in all its aspects and relations, to guard against everything oppressive, unequal, or sectional in its provisions, and to see to it that nothing is done to check or discourage, directly or indirectly, the European immigration of the future, which, we may confidently believe, will add, even more than that of the past has done, to the strength and wealth of the republic, and to the happiness and usefulness of its people, each one of whom will have occasion for gratitude as he remembers that in some previous generation, if not in the immediate present, there has been found for him within its ample limits an adopted country and a new home.

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